



Public Involvement and Media Relations

Objectives: At the end of this session each participant will:

- 1. Know our obligations to the public**
- 2. Know value of becoming a trusted asset to the community and how to become one**
- 3. Know ways to work with elected officials**
- 4. Understand the importance of good relations with the news media**
- 5. Know the keys to conducting effective public meetings/info exchange meetings.**

Our Obligations to the Public

1. To inform a broad segment of the public of the stake they have in an issue.



Our Obligations to the Public

2. To clearly inform the public how they can have an impact on the outcome of an issue.



Our Obligations 3. To systematically target the publics to insure their representation in the decisions that affect them.	Our Grandkids
	Taxpayers
	Special Interests
	Local Citizens
	Adj. Landowners
	Politicians
	Project Visitors
	Business Owners

Our Obligations to the Public
4. To listen...

A Public Involvement Program

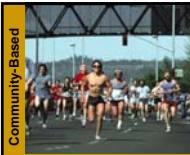
- **Community-Based**
- **Know and Work with Elected Officials**
- **Media Relations – The Media Can Help**
- **Conduct Effective Public Meetings and Community Outreach.**



Community Based

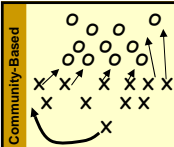
Why Bother to Involve the Community?

- **Your project is a HUGE part of your community**
- **When you involve the community, you will build a strong base of support for your operation and the Corps in general and you will have the community's support when you need it**
- **You are managing the resource better if you do.**



Be Pro-Active – You Take the Lead

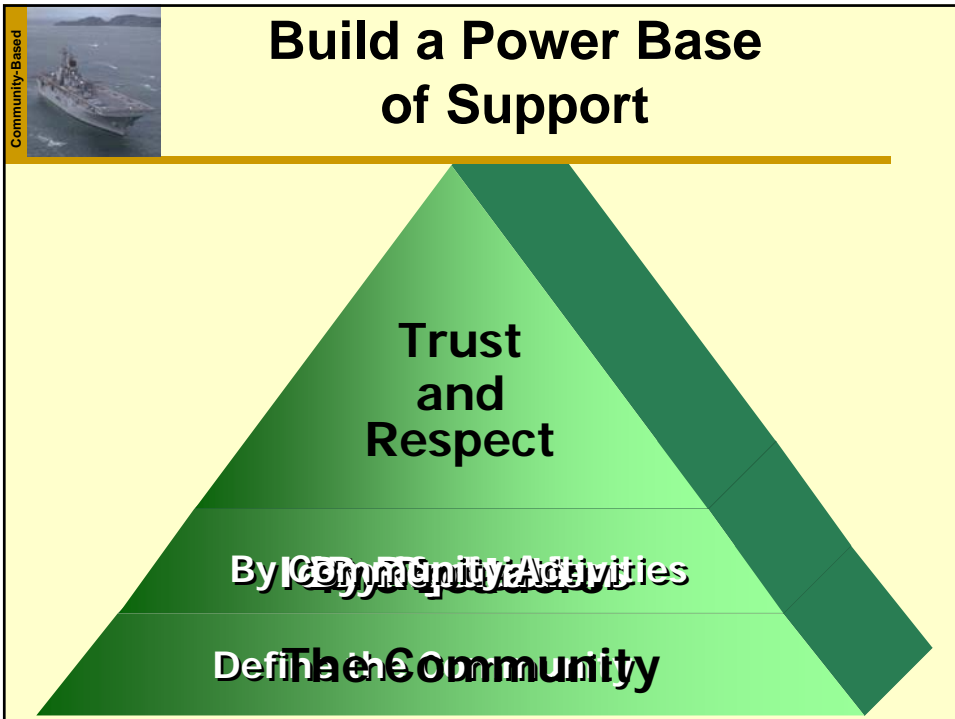
**Don't
Wait
Until
You
Have a
Problem!**



Best Defense is a Good Offense



**Find ways to
involve your
staff and
yourself in
the
community.**



Community-Based



Be a Part of the Community

Local Leadership Programs Chamber of Commerce Programs



Leadership New Braunfels









Be a Part of the Community

Be active in local civic groups, youth groups or non-profit groups' activities



Be a Part of the Community

- What ways are you and your staff involved in the community?



Community-Based

Involve the Community in Project Management

Citizen's Committees



A Variety of Names:

- Committees
- PDTs
- "Friends" Groups
- Advisory Group.



Community-Based

General Principles for Citizen's Committees

- Clearly define its purpose and its limits of authority
- Establish the life of the committee
- Establish the rules
- Represent the full range of values in the community-select a good cross section.





Functions of a Citizen's Committee

- Resolves conflict among the various interests
- Advises management on plans and priorities
- Helps host and participates in public meetings
- Serves as a communication link.



Benefits of a Citizen's Group

Acts as a sounding board

- + Serves as an advisory group
- + Is a channel of communication

= A strong advocate of ownership and recognition.



Working with Other Agencies

Good relations are essential.

Understand and respect their limitations.

Explain their stake in the decisions.

Understand the organizations and their agendas.

Working with Partnerships

- **Can be formal or informal**
- **May be with other government agencies or non-profits**
- **Becoming recognized as valuable mgt. tool, leverage resources**
- **More details to come later today.**

**Granger Lake –
TETRA Partnership**





Community-Based

Working with Volunteers

Builds support & lake "ownership" in the community

CRO volunteers

IMBA -Trail building



Community-Based

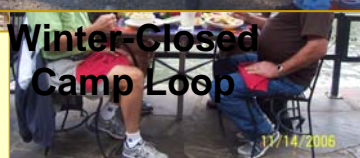
Newest Program – The Volunteer Village

Winter Texans

- All Stay In One Location
- Low costs – materials & supplies and shirts
- Work as a team and independently
- Jobs included painting, litter assistance, special photography and
- Camaraderie



Winter-Closed Camp Loop





Interpretive Outreach Programs



- Talks given to youth groups, civic groups, business owners, park visitors and others
- Programs can help garner support for management policies
- Programs may be useful for input from the public.



Community Based Public Involvement Program

In Summary.....

- **Is Pro-Active**
- **Involves the citizens and stakeholders of the area**
- **Gets you and your staff involved in the community (and vice-versa)**
- **Includes other agencies, non-profit groups, partners and volunteers.**



Political Publics Working with Elected Officials

- **Do your homework**
- **Deal only in the facts you know**
- **They are busy.**



Educating Your Congressman and Their Staff About Your Project

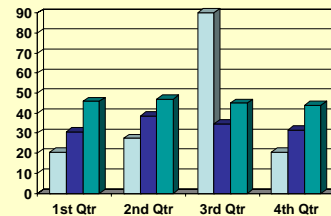
- **Be Pro-Active – Keep them up to date**
- **Let them know you have the pulse of the people**
- **Let them know you have public support**
- **Gain their trust and confidence that you are the Corps POC in their District.**





Have the Information They Need

- Project facts, figures and stats - Consistent and accurate with District Congressional CD information
- Project challenges and proposed remedies
- Project needs – Should be consistent with prior budget submittals
- Relate success stories and future plans.



Politicians – Working Relationships

- Keep them informed of progress – esp. for Congressional-add projects
- Always show your appreciation for things they have done for you
- Find something on a personal level.





Working with the Politician's Staff

- Get to know them on a first name basis
- They can get much of what you want and need done
- They should be comfortable calling you whenever they have a question about your project.



District Procedures for Congressional Contacts

If they contact you:

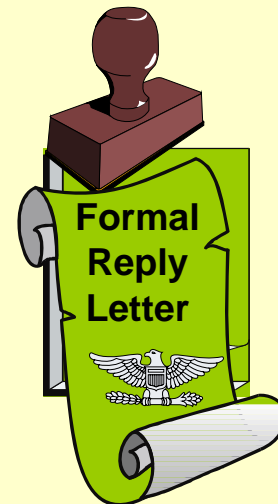
- Report the contact and what occurred to your boss and PAO
- Solve any problem that you can at your level
- These relationships keep Congressionals to a minimum
- Be responsive and provide accurate information and help solve problems.



Replies to Written Congressional Contacts

Send draft information to District for reply

Formal reply will be signed by the District Commander



News Media



This is strictly OFF the record.

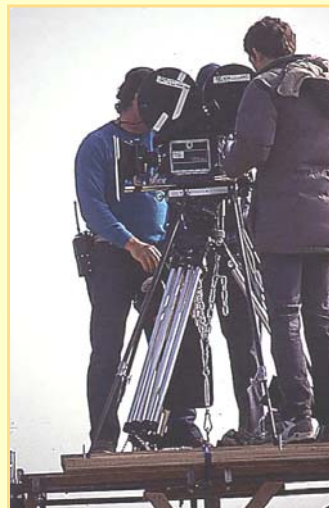


Show Interview Demo DVD



News Media

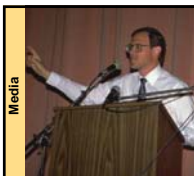
- If they come to you it is usually for factual project information or a conflict is brewing
- Get to know the reporters, they always hold the trump card
- Understand where they are coming from
- Cooperate with them.





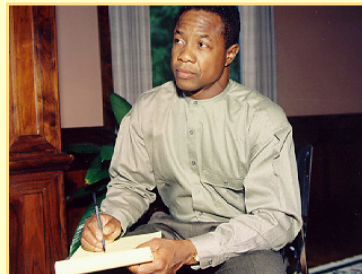
Media Relations - SOP

- Again, be Pro-Active....Ensure positive success stories get in the local papers and on radio frequently
- If they don't come to you, then you bring it to them.
- Get to know the local reporters and editors so they feel comfortable calling you.



When Asked for an Interview

- Determine the subject of the interview
- Determine interview time and their deadline
- If possible, go over questions with the reporter before the interview
- Make notes on possible questions and prepare appropriate answers.





Before the Interview

Determine what point you want to make and how you are going to make it before they arrive.



When Being Interviewed

DO



Accent positives and downplay negatives

Let the reporter finish before you respond

Be forthright but seize the opportunity to emphasize your main point—
“Give them the quote”

Keep it simple.



Interview Don'ts

- ✗ Don't repeat the question before you answer**
- ✗ Don't shout or talk in an unusual tone**
- ✗ Don't use jargon and acronyms**
- ✗ Don't get into hypothetical situations**
- ✗ Don't become provoked or lose your cool**
- ✗ Don't say more than is necessary-
answer the question and STOP**
- ✗ Never lie and don't say "no comment".**



When Giving the On-Camera Interview



- Look at the interviewer, not the camera
- Smile every chance you get if the topic allows it
- Relax
- Dress appropriately
- It doesn't last as long as it seems.



Media

Media Stories to Share?



Public Meetings



Planning the Meeting

- Determine the purpose of the meeting
- Design the meeting to fit the purpose
- Make sure all appropriate groups and individuals are advised or invited to the meeting
- If site of meeting is unfamiliar, visit the site before date of meeting.



The Day of the Meeting

- Dress appropriately
- Be there early
- Mingle before meeting...
- Know your audience
- Have your staff check and double-check the equipment, props, etc. Come self-contained if possible. Have back-ups.





Conducting the Meeting

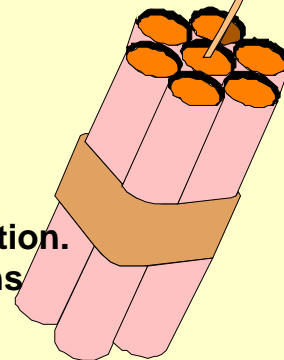
- Have someone take notes
- Set the ground rules so that all may participate
- Be responsive and try to relieve tensions
- Appear relaxed and be sincere
- Pay attention to your audience, Listen to what they are saying
- Don't let yourself be drawn into an argument
- Always summarize & relate what will be the next step.



Hostile Audiences

You Are Not the Target, You Just Seem to Be

- Relieve stress prior to the meeting.
- Be a facilitator
- Set ground rules
- Use humor, if appropriate
- Avoid defensiveness
- Sometimes they need to vent
- Use active listening techniques
- Speak to the problem...not the solution.
Allow audience to offer their solutions

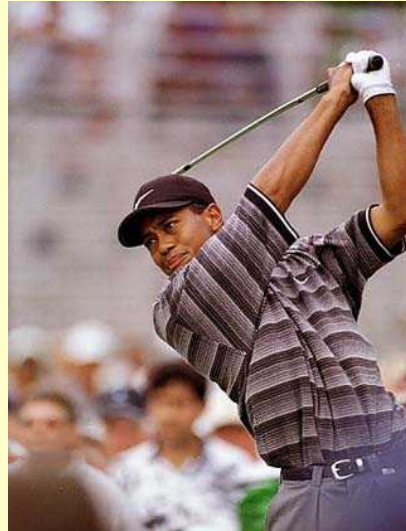




After the Meeting

FOLLOW THROUGH
with any commitments
made to the public

**Meet with your staff for
comment and
evaluation to determine
the effectiveness of the
meeting.**



Annual Information Exchange Meetings

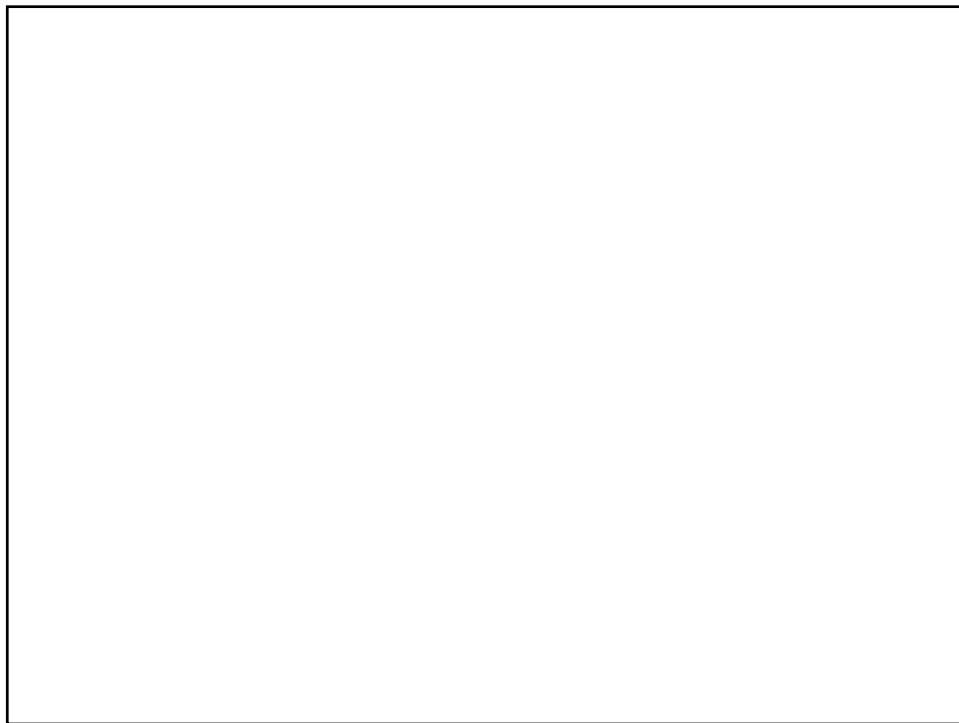
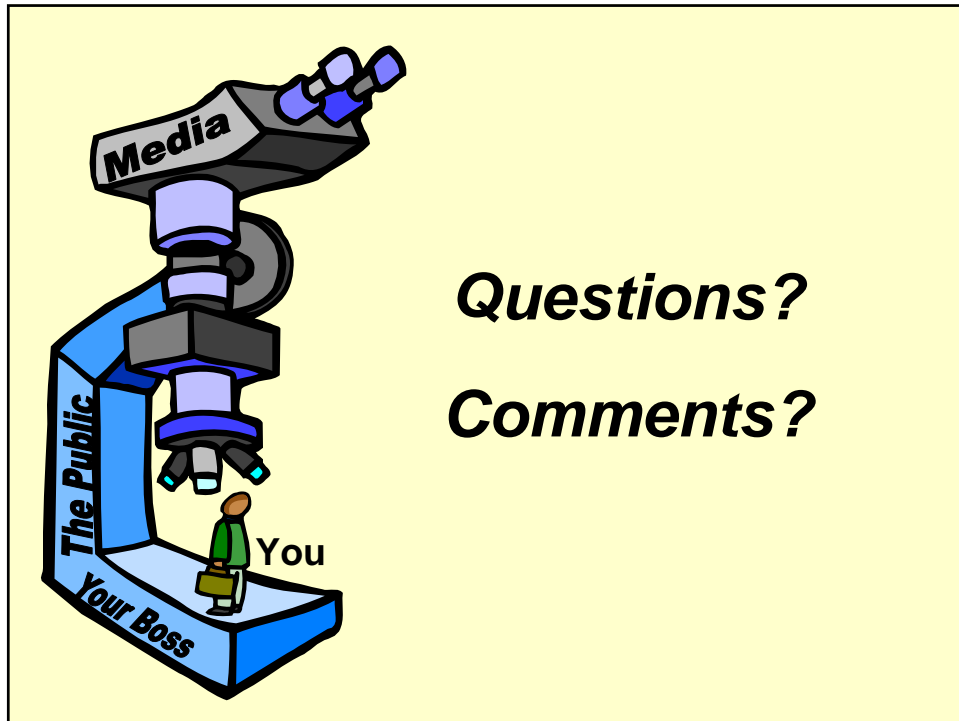
- **CRO lakes hold annual exchange meetings.**
- **They are Pro-Active – don't have to have a problem before you have a meeting**



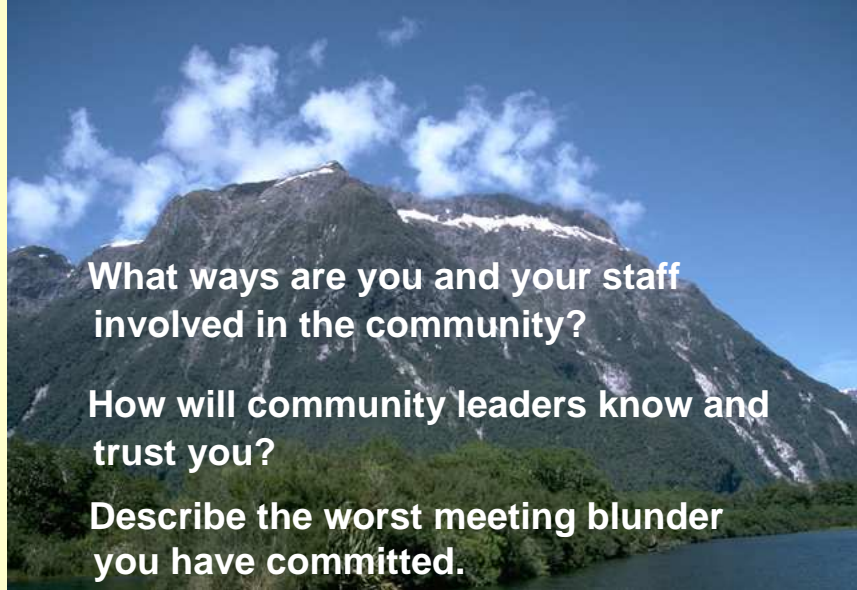
Value of Annual Information Exchange Meetings

- They are an **EXCHANGE** of ideas and info
- Keeps you plugged into the community
- Allow other agencies and partners to give info and answer questions, demonstrates we have working relationships
- By explaining how the concerns of last year were addressed or resolved, it shows we have listened. Closes the loop.





Discussion Questions



What ways are you and your staff involved in the community?

How will community leaders know and trust you?

Describe the worst meeting blunder you have committed.